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PERIODIC REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH USSR

In a recent report, P. F. Ostapchuk gave data on the achievements of the USSR medical industry for 1948, with a brief survey of possible and desirable future trends.

The 1948 plan was exceeded by 7 percent, a 32-percent increase over 1947 production. Production costs were decreased by 12 percent, permitting increased production of several important items such as penicillin (sevenfold increase over 1947), disulfane (fivefold increase). Medical glucose production in 1948 was 2.3 times greater than 1947, aspirin about 2.5 times greater, pyramidon about 2.2 times greater, rivanol 3.7 times greater, and laboratory glassware 2.4 times. Medical factories have once again started production of 139 medicinal items, and plans are underway for starting production on an additional 136 items.

Under a specialization program initiated by Glavmedprom, production of various categories will be limited, resulting in an increased production rate. It is hoped that this expediency will help correct the most serious condition of 1948 when only 81.4 percent of the categories were manufactured. The greatest improvement is needed in laboratory glassware factories, which were able to manufacture only about 66.7 percent of the required amount of glassware. Distribution of consumer products must be improved. In 1948 many of the enterprises of the therapeutic prophylactic network did not obtain their assigned quota of aspirin, beryllium streptocide, pyramidon, sprays, small dishes, and other glassware. Glavmed is partially responsible for the failure to fulfill quotas due to the fact that its raw-material-supply organization is poor.

Many of the instruments and much of the equipment should be improved. There are constant complaints about the poor quality of "Rekord" sprays, blood containers and flasks, cystoscopes, and thoracoscopes. Many complained about the fact that products of the chemicopharmaceutical factories are not properly packed for shipment, and consignments often arrive at their destination either damaged or completely destroyed. Investigation showed that the "Industriya" Glassware Factory and the Ufimsk Glassware Factory packed their products very poorly and that breakage was very high; at the Ufimsk Factory it ran as high as 26 percent.

- 1 -

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On the whole, however, the USSR medical industry did well and gave the peoples of the USSR 40 million rubles of medical products above plans. This figure would have been even higher had all the factories attempted to improve technology, lower production costs, and economize on raw-material expenditures. Some factories, among them the Factory imeni Dzerzhinskiy, factories at Sverdlovsk and Anzhero-Sudzhensk, and the Moscow Salyocyclic Factory, were actually guilty of wasteful use of critical raw materials.

Many of the factories have poor administrators who have not learned the principles of smooth operation; frequently, plans are filled only by increased activity at the end of each quarter.

During 1948 the factories under the jurisdiction of Glavmedprom were equipped with modern tools and taught the fundamentals of improved production techniques.

The Board of Deputy Ministers passed several resolutions after hearing Ostapchuk's report. Their first action was to appoint Ostapchuk, Denisov, Fedchenko, Zaytsev, and Grishakov to a committee to investigate various production lags, determine reasons for these lags, and recommend corrective measures. They were urged to get to work immediately to iron out most of the production kinks by the end of the second quarter 1949. It was recommended that the committee also determine which factories are producing the so-called "easy to manufacture" goods in order to show high production levels, rather than proceeding according to the needs of the medical field.

Various raw-material-supply organizations have been told to consult factory requirement graphs and proceed accordingly.

Transportation organizations were warned to make sure that consignments leave the factories and arrive at their destination in good condition.

The Board commended the efforts of the "Krasnogvardeyets" Factory, the Factory imeni Lenin, the "EMA" Factory, and the "Akrikhin" Factory. At the same time, it issued a warning to the directors and administrators of the Klin Glassware Factory, the Tomsk Factory, and to Korotkov, chief engineer of the Administration for the Production of Glassware, who have been rather lax in increasing production.

The Board also passed on a resolution which set forth basic methods for increasing production in 1949 and fulfilling 1949 production quotas.

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- 2 -